

Three Indicted By Jury Plead Guilty To Trafficking Cocaine

Three of 32 defendants indicted June 11 on 300 counts of cocaine-trafficking have pleaded guilty. Assistant District Attorney Tommy Hicks said Tuesday that Jack Truesdale, 32, of Ft. Myers, Fla., and Clarence Virgil Roberts, 50, of Holden Beach, entered guilty pleas Monday in Brunswick County Superior Court.

Truesdale, entered a guilty plea Tuesday. Details were not available. She had been indicted on 31 counts of trafficking and conspiracy to traffic. Her husband, charged with 33 counts, pleaded guilty to 22: 16 counts of conspiracy to traffic and six counts of trafficking by possession. Hicks said the minimum sentence would be "500 and some years."

Also Monday, Roberts pleaded guilty to all charges against him: six counts each of trafficking and conspiracy to traffic. While Roberts and the Truesdales are the only defendants to plead guilty so far, Hicks said he expects more pleas. "They are driving me crazy," he said at mid-day Tuesday. He and two of the SBI officers involved in the trafficking investigation met

throughout the day Monday and Tuesday with attorneys for the defendants.

"We're negotiating pleas in some other cases, but we haven't entered them. Judge (Henry W.) Hight has to leave Thursday, so we're running out of court time."

Additional pleas could be taken during the next session of superior

criminal court, which begins Aug. 31 and will be followed by a special week-long session.

Hicks said he expects all defendants to be sentenced at the same time, after all cases have been completed either by trial or plea negotiations.

The Brunswick County investigative grand jury was the first of its kind in the state. It was created

after the General Assembly passed a law permitting such a jury to be formed to investigate an ongoing criminal activity or specific criminal occurrence. It has the power to compel testimony.

After four months of work the jury was discharged of its investigative powers, but has continued to sit as a regular grand jury.

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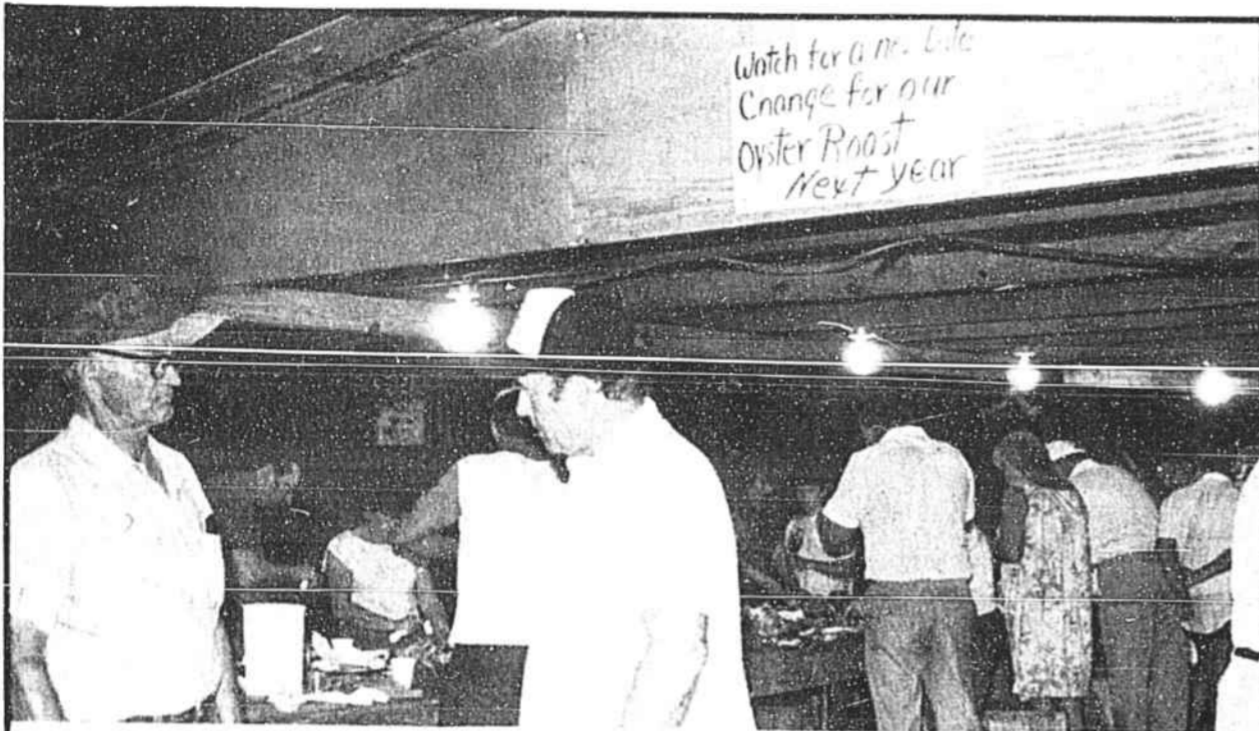
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THIS SIGN AT the Dixon Chapel Oyster Roast in Varnamtown last October hinted that changes were in the making.

DELAY WON'T HURT FESTIVAL

Oyster Season To Open Oct. 15

BY SUSAN USHER

At the request of area fishermen, oyster season will open locally on Oct. 15, two weeks later than in past years.

Local oysters, however, will still be served at the N.C. Oyster Festival Oct. 10 and 11 at Seaside.

The new statewide opening date also isn't expected to adversely affect the annual Dixon Chapel Oyster Roast, scheduled Oct. 24 at the church in Varnamtown.

The oyster festival has obtained a special dispensation from the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries to obtain local oysters before opening day, according to Anne Marie Schettini, director of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, which sponsors the promotional event.

"If anybody wants to eat oysters, they'll have to come to our festival," she added in a lighter vein.

In an agreement reached with Division Director Bill Hogarth and two local oyster houses, Milliken's at Shallotte Point and Carson Varnum's at Varnamtown, pickers will be "tagged" so that they can harvest early without getting ticketed by enforcement officers.

This year the festival will also have a guaranteed supply. "Last year we ran through them so fast it was unbelievable," said Schettini. "This year we have a commitment for 250 bushels of oysters."

The change in schedule should help the Dixon Chapel Oyster Roast, said spokesman Marlene Varnum. "It will give us ample time to get some oysters." In past years, community members have sometimes been pushed for time in which to harvest sufficient oysters.

To accommodate the new opening date, the church has changed the date for its roast from the second Saturday in October to the fourth Saturday in October.

The church is located in the Varnamtown fishing

community and many of its members were among the fishermen who urged the state to change the opening date. When the season opened last year, they said the water temperature was too warm, affecting both the quality and quantity of oysters.

It was requests and petitions such as theirs, said Ed McCoy, deputy director of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, that led to the change in regulations. "This is what they wanted," he said.

In past years, the season has opened around Oct. 1 in North Carolina waters to the south of the Surf City Bridge, and on Oct. 15 to its north. This year all waters will open at the same time.

The earlier date for the southern coast, said McCoy, had first been set in response to a competitive market situation in South Carolina.

Previously the opening date was set by proclamation; the Oct. 15 date is under new regulations that went into effect Sept. 1.

The state reserves the right, however, to set by proclamation a closing date as late as March 31 and to delay the opening of specified areas, such as management areas where shellfish have been relayed or stocked.

"Where we've spent a lot of time and money to provide a product, we'll hold the opening until a later date when they're of better quality," he said. "The management areas are handled differently from public bottoms."

While the new regulations don't become official until Sept. 1, Dixon Chapel church members were optimistic a year ago that the state could be swayed to change the 1987 season opening.

They posted a sign at the oyster roast: "Watch for a new date change for our oyster roast next year."

CANDIDATES:

3 Towns Just Couldn't Get Enough Of Them

While candidates for public office are plentiful in some Brunswick County towns, there aren't enough of them in others.

The filing deadline has been extended a week in Sunset Beach, Calabash and Navassa. According to the Brunswick County Board of Elections, residents of those towns have until noon Friday, Aug. 14, to file for office with the Brunswick County Board of Elections.

The fee is \$5.

"This is the first time this has ever happened at Sunset Beach," said Town Administrator Linda Fluegel.

By noon Friday only two candidates had filed for the three posts available, but by the end of the day Monday, there was a full slate.

Councilwoman Mary Katherine Griffith filed for re-election and M. Mason Barber Jr. filed for mayor. They were joined Monday by Edward M. (Eddie) Gore Jr., whose father, Ed Gore, is mayor pro-tem.

Incumbents Mayor Jim Gordon and Councilman Donald Safrit have not filed.

A county election official had suggested to Fluegel that the low turnout of candidates might indicate residents like the way the town's being run.

If not that, added Fluegel, "the only thing I could think of is that they're just not interested."

It's also the first year Brunswick County Board of Elections Supervisor Lynda Britt can remember

three boards coming up short of candidates.

Navassa

In Navassa, Mayor Bobby Brown and Commissioners Eulis A. Willis and Thomas V. Merrick filed for re-election. No one has filed for a third available seat.

Calabash

Mayor Doug Simmons was the only candidate to file for office in Calabash, where efforts by the board to obtain funding for a water system ran into stiff opposition this year.

All five seats on the town council are available. They are currently held by Robert Weber, Sonia Stevens, Suzy Moore, Linda Roberts and Pati Lewellyn, none of whom plan to seek re-election. All terms are for two years.

If at least one candidate hasn't filed for every available seat in the three towns by noon Friday, said Brunswick County Board of Elections Supervisor Lynda Britt, "filing will be closed and we will conduct the election."

Residents would still have an opportunity to run as write-in candidates.

Several towns had no problem attracting candidates.

Holden Beach

At Holden Beach, while incumbent John Tandy was the only person to file for mayor, nine residents will vie for three seats on the town board of commissioner. One is an incumbent, Graham King. Commissioners Lyn

Holden and Hal Stanley did not seek re-election.

Other candidates are Guilford Bass, Robert W. Buck, Donald F. Carey Jr., Kermit Coble, Rose Cole, Martin Feldt, Georgia Langley and Margaret Vasco.

Members will each serve a two-year term.

Gay Atkins and William Williamson will continue on the board, completing four-year terms.

Shallotte

Three candidates have filed for the three seats open on the Shallotte Board of Aldermen. They are Aldermen David L. Gause and Wilton D. Harrelson, and Jody (Jay G.) Simmons. Incumbent Bobby Ray Russ did not file for re-election. Continuing on the board are Mayor Jerry Jones and Aldermen Paul Wayne Reeves and Sarah Tripp.

Ocean Isle Beach

Betty Williamson, recently appointed to the office, is the only candidate for mayor of Ocean Isle Beach.

Five people are running for three commissioners' seats, including incumbents Virginia Gibson and Debbie S. Fox. Other candidates are DeCarol Williamson, who was appointed to the board earlier this month, John Brockington and Ed Steele.

The mayor serves a two-year term and commissioners serve four-year terms.

(See 3 TOWNS, Page 2-A)

Calabash Is Without Council Candidates

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Calabash may provide a knotty problem never before presented to the state board of elections, should their town council ballot remain empty through Friday.

As of press time, no one had filed for any of the five seats open in a town where all council members run for election in the same year. Doug Simmons, incumbent mayor, has filed for re-election and is unopposed.

Jim Wallace, attorney for the state board of elections, said Tuesday, "I've never heard of this situation happening. If there are no write-in votes, and no one files, I'm not sure what we'd do, but we'd find some way of appointing members, or having the governor help out, or ask the present board to continue serving until the next election."

The town had already asked for and received a five-day extension for filing that expires Friday.

At Monday's town council meeting, Council Member Pati Lewellyn asked Town Attorney Mike Ramos,

"What happens if no one files?" and he replied, "You all have to stay in office, if there are no write-ins."

Wallace explained that even one candidate or one write-in would constitute, with the mayor, a governing body that could fill the other vacancies by appointment.

Most of the incumbent council members said the job was too demanding for them to continue, considering the constraints of their jobs.

Lewellyn, a realtor, said, "If you do it the way it should be done, it's so time-consuming, and I have to work for a living."

She added that the attitude of townspeople was also a factor in her decision to step down. "We've gotten so much criticism, I don't know why no one has filed to replace us," she said.

That was the feeling of Robert Weber, retired engineer who, like Lewellyn, is completing his first term of public office. "It's been interesting," he said, "but you don't get any backing from the town."

The council's recent decision to

build a water system, beginning with one road whose property owners would be assessed amounts up to \$400, was hotly protested by some residents.

Council Member Suzi Moore, who owns a grocery store and photography studio, also completing her first full term, said, "If I was written in, I'd serve, but I don't need any volunteer work."

Linda Roberts is another incumbent who had not served in public office before her two-year term in Calabash.

"I think I've done some things while in office," she said, "but I didn't want to take a seat from someone who could do better. Also, you run into so much criticism from people who want things, but don't want to pay for them."

The only incumbent council member with previous service is Sonia Stevens, who was on the council for one previous term, after which she served a term as mayor.

Stevens could not be reached for comment.

State Fines Developer \$20,200 For Erosion Control Violations

BY SUSAN USHER

A Brunswick County developer has been fined \$20,200 by the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development for violations of the state's erosion control law.

Jimmy Gore of Shallotte has been cited by the N.C. Division of Land Resources for violations at his 23-acre Sherrow River Development south of Shallotte on Gray Bridge Road off N.C. 130.

He was fined the maximum penalty of \$100 per day for the 202 days from March 17, 1987, through July 6. Gore has 30 days in which to pay the fine or request an administrative hearing.

Steve Conrad, division director, said Gore had obtained a state-approved erosion control plan for the project in April 1986, but was not following it.

He was first sent a notice of violation by the department's Wilmington office in December 1986 following a

site inspection.

The inspection showed that in grading for a boat ramp to a creek on the property Gore had not provided any erosion control measures, said Conrad. Also, no ground cover was provided on graded, exposed slopes and along ditches to prevent sedimentation from washing onto adjacent property and into a nearby creek. The property drains into the Shallotte River.

Conrad said some progress was made on the property in January, then it stopped.

On Feb. 25, Gore was sent a second notice of violation. "There was still basically the same problem," said Conrad. "He was still not in compliance."

Fines are based on a weighted point system that takes into account such factors as the nature of the violation, the acreage disturbed, the extent of off-site damage and sedimentation. While the points may

add up to more than \$100 a day, that's the maximum fine allowed.

A release from the department indicated additional enforcement action may be forthcoming. Gore has not been assessed penalties for the days elapsed since July 6.

Some previous erosion violations in the county have been handled with consent agreements, said Conrad.

"We've had a rash of these in Brunswick County in the past year," he continued. "There's so much development activity in the coastal areas."

The North Carolina Sedimentation Pollution Control Act requires developers to have a state approved erosion control plan on construction sites one acre or more in size prior to beginning construction. It also requires erosion control measures sufficient to retain sediment generated by construction within the boundaries of the project and out of streams.

N.C. 211.

Civietown, a passenger in the car driven by Ms. Pierce, was taken to the Brunswick Hospital in Supply and later transported to Chapel Hill. Ms. Pierce was student driving for Ms. Outlaw, an instructor with Brunswick Driving School.

According to State Trooper R.L. Murray's report, Johnson's 1986 Datsun was traveling at a "very high rate of speed when it ran off the road on the right just before meeting" a 1986 Chevrolet operated by Ms. Pierce, who was driving north on

Johnson's car came back onto the roadway, skidded sideways and crossed over into the left lane. The front of Ms. Pierce's car struck the Johnson vehicle in the right door, the report stated.

Both cars traveled off the roadway and down an embankment where they caught fire and burned, Trooper Murray reported.

Johnson was thrown from his vehicle. Murray's report indicated there

(See TWO KILLED, Page 2-A)